

Femmes
d'Esprit
Spring 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Editor's Letter Amelia Ellis, '13
4	Honors Matters Dr. Amy Bass
6	A Fond Farewell: Senior memoirs
11	To the Class of 2017 Senior Symposium Members
12	What Has Honors Been Up To?
14	NRHC 2013: Philadelphia Katy Baudendistal, '16 Meagan Yeno, '16 Mark Ramirez
18	Honors Conference Day
21	Reflection of a First-Year Claudia Benitez, '16
22	Hurricane Sandy: A Reflection Alicia Muth, '15
23	What would your crown look like?

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About the Cover

In early April, students travelled to Philadelphia for the annual NRHC conference (read more about it inside this issue!) As part of the legendary City-as-Text program that plays a key role in the conference each year, students visited the Rodin Museum, and are pictured here by one of the versions of his most famous piece, The Thinker. How appropriate a space is that for Honors students?

EDITORS LETTER

Amelia Ellis, '13

This issue I have an excuse for you all (which I will get to later)—but I’m putting this letter into Dr. Bass’ “co-editor” capable hands. So I am a happy editor, and aren’t editors supposed to work together anyway?

I’ve never considered myself one for group projects, or any close collaboration. Yes, many would understand this sentiment—every person feels that the work is terribly disproportional. “Is it done yet,” you are asked. “No, it’s not done yet! How do you expect me to get it done when I haven’t even received your fifty word contribution,” you think to yourself. Ah, yes, collaboration has never felt so tense. One is always taken off-guard when collaboration works in your favor.



Collaboration taking place in the Honors seminar room as members of “Race and Ethnicity” prepare for Honors Conference Day.

CNR Drama recently produced William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”. Of the 17 students cast, 11 make their home in Honors, all of whom had Junior Colloquium projects to prepare, boat-loads of papers, lab reports, and other schoolwork. After a rigorous run of nine performances, to take from Joyce, “[Exhaustion] was general in Honors.” But the feeling of being able to come together and work towards this one project, this one really big group project—to focus our reserve amount of energy into Theseus’ Court, the Fairies, and the Mechanicals; set-build; design costumes; paint make-up; and prep daughters both emotionally and dramatically—outweighs all exhaustive negativity, and past group project trauma.



How many Honors students can you spot on stage?

That last paragraph is my excuse for giving this letter over to Dr. Bass, and I guess an excuse for all of the Honors students for that matter. But the work that has been done by Honors students collaborating together with *Femme d’Esprit, Phoenix, Tatler*; on a personal note, working with Regina Alvarado on our jazz/blues duo; with CNR Drama and Honors Conference Day—successful and fruitful collaboration—that, *that* is an excuse worth fighting for.

Now get back to your homework, ladies!

HONORS MATTERS: EMBEDDED IN DRAMA

Dr. Amy Bass, Honors Program Director

When the email from Laurie Peterson Castaldo came across my screen, I instantly knew what it might mean: weeks of rehearsals, late nights, a lot of driving back and forth, and drama – both the good kind and the bad. But it was irresistible: CNR Drama was staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – a masterpiece comedy of William Shakespeare that has been deeply embedded in my brain since I saw it long ago, seated next to my theater critic father, at Edith Wharton's house, The Mount, where the esteemed Shakespeare & Company presented it outdoors, weaving those of us who sat there into the webs of enchantment created by both fairies and mortals.

So I responded to Laurie's email, asking if someone who was just turning six-years-old might be eligible for a fairy audition. Her response – “anyone who can walk, run, or fly may audition” – sealed the deal. I went home and told Hannah that this might be the opportunity she had been asking about since her drama class ended only the week before.

For the audition, Hannah insisted on wearing wings. She has a stockpile of them in her dress-up drawer, stuffed in with the cowgirl hats, princess dresses, ballet tutus, feather boas, riding boots, and so on. She was quiet at her audition – a rare thing – and she stood before faces very familiar to me: Honors students. Laurie sat with her on the stage, talked to her, and masterfully vetted her ability to stand before an audience and be brave.

She got the part. We plunged in. And who knew that I, too, was going to have an amazing learning experience?

From the beginning, it became clear that I would need to stay for rehearsals to manage the six-year-old. There were two other children, albeit much older, in the production, including Nora, the daughter of my dear colleague, Dr. Nereida Segura-Rico, and a beloved friend of

Hannah's. Nora took the responsibility of hanging out and helping Hannah very seriously. I told Laurie to put me to work if needed – it was silly for me to just sit there: she took me up on the offer. During blocking, I filled in for anyone who wasn't there, taking multiple roles on stage while furiously scribbling notes in our (well-decorated with crayons and stickers) script about where Hannah was supposed to be and when.

But most of all, I watched. I watched students I had known for years blossom into their roles as Hermia and Helena and various fairies, and students I had never met before work their magic. I watched them dance, learning intricate choreography, and evolving into the physical aspects of their characters. I watched two of my advisees work out an intricate fight scene, cringing as they battled on stage. I watched them behind the scenes: stage managing, costume designing, figuring out props and lights and sound and marketing – barking orders into radios about who was needed and when, and handing out chore charts that included minutiae critical to a successful production; things that had never occurred to me as necessary. I watched them studying their chemistry texts backstage in a rare down moment, and editing their thesis files in the “green room.” These students amaze me in the classroom on a regular basis, spend countless hours in my office, and send me texts and emails at most any hour of the night, and yet it was as if I was getting to know them for the first time.

As a member of the SAS faculty, I have attended CNR Drama's productions faithfully, admiring its work, but always cautious because of the tensions that always emerged in the weeks leading up to an opening night: would students be too tired to get their work done, to be in class on time, to function? I was now on the other side, embedded in what they were doing, and learning much about what needed to occur on both sides in order to allow them to

balance their passions for theater, their allegiance to this community, and their pursuit of their academic studies.

In the final weeks, as their bound scripts fell to the floor of Romita, and they struggled to perfect their lines from memory, I had a new assignment: to be “on book”. No longer could I pay attention to where the six-year-old was and whether she needed a snack or had to go to the bathroom: I had to focus intently on the script, helping actors who stumbled, and filling in for



those who were not there. I was able to do this because I knew that the six-year-old was fine: she had become part of this group of theater folk. They sat on the floor and colored with her, often providing the paper and the crayons; they took her to the bathroom when she needed to go; they found her snacks; and they comforted her when her “belly hurt.” No longer was I concerned when she kissed me good-bye and fled backstage, sometimes for hours. She was safe. She was happy. And it was because of the compassion and the generosity of the students that she was so.

After the countless hours of rehearsal, during which I watched Laurie and the students pull together something that seemed like a miracle, I sat through all nine performances, watching the production grow better each time. “It’s like you’re seeing it for the first time,” a mother of one of Hannah’s friends who came to the show said to me when I laughed at a new nuance

from Lysander. “It’s always different,” I answered. And it was. The students became more comfortable with their parts, with the Shakespearean language, and with each other. Everyone was tired – and no one more so than a six-year-old who was never in bed before 11pm – but everyone was happy.

And then it was over. I would be relieved to return to a more normal schedule, a better-rested child, and a head that was no longer filled with entire memorized acts of this play. But I was sad. Not just because my child had such a wonderful experience and did not want to see it end. But because it had been a long time since I had been so deeply moved by an encounter with students, one in which I was able to gain so much insight and so much knowledge about who they are and what they want

and how they do it. It was a dream, indeed, but one very much grounded in the gifts of these students.



Photos: Top, Amelia Ellis and Regina Alvarado as Helena and Hermia. Bottom: Dr. Bass and Dr. Segura-Rico's daughters flank Titania's fairies

A FOND FAREWELL: FINAL WORDS FROM SOME OF OUR GRADUATES

Molly McMurray
History

From Molly: I was not sure what to expect when I accepted the invitation to join honors. I expected extra classes and that was it. What I did not expect was to form ties of friendship and sisterhood with women older and younger than I, in different fields, with interests and knowledge so varied from mine. Every semester presented a new challenge. And when the challenge proved difficult to best alone, there was always a fellow honors student to give advice and bounce ideas off of. All my honors classes were safe havens, where I did not fear giving my honest opinion or asking questions. The classes, the professors, and my fellow honors students helped to refine my talent and knowledge in ways I did not expect out of college let alone one or two classes a semester. I will always remember my time in honors. The fun shared with other honors students, seeing my first Broadway show (Avenue Q) with my friends and laughing the whole time. These last four years were a gift that I shall always treasure and I will miss my fellow honors students once I graduate.

From Dr. Bass: *For me, Molly is the best of all worlds: an Honors student who majored in History! Her legacy at CNR — she says she is the 13th member of her family to grace us with her presence — will be her never-ending and seemingly boundless thirst for knowledge, her incredible compassion and enthusiasm for her classmates, and her hilarious stage presence in various CNR Drama productions. Molly is without question one-of-a-kind. It has been a privilege to serve as her advisor, her thesis mentor, and as president of her fan club.*



*Molly as Tiny Tim in last semester's *A Christmas Carol*, presented in conjunction with the Honors seminar entitled "December in America."*

Tazmin Uddin
English/Religious Studies

From Tazmin: Where do I start? My earliest memory of the Honors experience began on a Fall day in the Honors Wing. It was 3am, and I was out of bed making a meal to begin my fast, since it was still the month of Ramadan. As I finished eating, cleaned up, and went to my room, I was happy to finally get under my covers. Fate had other plans and it turned out that I had locked myself out. You see, I had a double to myself that first semester, and I nervously knocked on my RA's door. I must have looked really miserable because she simply let me back in. Looking back at this memory, I laugh at how I began my college career. That same semester, during INS, my class had to vote on who would present their speech in front of all the first year students, the Deans, and the President of the College. As my luck would have it, the class decided to choose me. This democracy left me wanting to disappear. My professor helped me prepare and my fellow Honors students took my index cards, returning them just before I had to go up. Reading my speech I noticed the smiley faces and words of encouragement written in the margins. Early on, we built an unbreakable bond and even as my journey makes me an Alumna of the Honors Program at CNR, I know that the friendships this program helped build are friendships that will continue to grow. It is hard to believe that all this happened three and a half years ago. I can't help but ask: Where did the time go? Now, as I leave the program, completing my undergraduate experience with a degree in English, a minor in Religious Studies, and the Legal Studies Certificate, I realize how much the Honors Program has given to me. Where else would I have been able to take classes on music and popular culture? On the origins of holidays and traditions? How else could I grow fond of Dylan, cherish Dickens, and make memories on Broadway? There is a lot that I have learned from the programs, but above everything I have learned, I have grown to value the friends I have made here, the memories that will carry me forward, and the skills that will allow me to succeed. It is hard to say farewell to a place that has given me so much, but as far as CNR goes, I am back as a Graduate student. Farewell my dear Honors Program, and to my Honors Cohort, until our paths cross again, all the success in your every endeavor. I know that you wonderful women do not need luck. Work hard and your dreams will always come true.



From Dr. Bass: *Forever engrained in my head, it seems, is hearing Taz's low laugh as she shakes her head at something in class, while muttering "Doooctor BAAAAAAssssssss." It is something I already miss, along with her extraordinary leadership — especially with Campus Ministry — and her habit of stopping by my office just to make sure everything was on track. An enthusiastic seminar participant, a voracious reader, Tazmin enlightened many about much.*

A FOND FAREWELL:

Genevieve Fleckenstein
English/Biology/French

“Sure, everything is ending,” Jules said, “but not yet.” — Jennifer Egan, A Visit from the Goon Squad

From Genevieve: There is a distinctly strange feeling that comes while standing at the end of four years of undergraduate work. This feeling doesn't present itself to you until you really take on that moment of recollection. The culmination of four strenuous years results in a mixture of ripened uncertainty, desire for new beginnings, and a pretty seasoned sense of self. There is no clear way to know what you, yourself, are capable of until you consider the factor of time. It takes time. The Honors Program afforded me this time. Although Honors students are notorious for over-committing beyond belief (I can and will attest to this) and the idea of time seems unfathomable, being a member of the Honors Program provides a real awareness of time. The Honors Program has given me the opportunity to work closely with a select cohort of intelligent individuals and intellectually challenging coursework. The time spent with dedicated and motivated students and faculty fostered an appreciation for collaborative discussion and academic independence. I'm thankful that Honors has been a major part of my senior year and I am anticipating the success that lies ahead. Special thanks to Dr. Bass, Dr. Kraman, and Dr. Segura-Rico for steering my Honors path.



Genevieve takes part in A Christmas Carol last semester.

From Dr. Bass: Genevieve came into the Honors Program rather late in the game, but once there, she found her spot and went to work. Her senior year, she chose to do the two-semester colloquium sequence, which was not required for her Honors track, but very indicative of her approach to her studies: get what you can while you can out of college. Her infectious spirit, her beautiful writing, and her willingness to say “yes” to most any academic challenge: these are the things we will miss.

Elizabeth Johnston
International Studies/
French



Highlights of Libby in Honors:

- Fall, 2012: presented on the importance of the Honors Program before the Board of Trustees
- Summer, 2012: Studied in Tours, France, as part of her studies in French language and literature
- Spring, 2012: presented on international law and women for Honors Conference Day
- Fall, 2011: Named to All-Tournament Team at Boston Invitational Tournament in women's basketball
- Summer, 2011: Studied at the Institute de Touraine, France
- Fall, 2010: Named to All-Conference Team and named Tournament MVP as part of championship HVWAC in Volleyball



From Dr. Bass: *I first met Libby when she was visiting campus as a high school senior. She had just flown in from Texas, and had one goal: to be in New York City, not just for the glamorous life, but to be close to the United Nations, where she hoped to work one day. From the second she set foot on campus, she was a force: a star athlete, a thoughtful and thought-provoking student, and a campus leader. From her travels abroad to her shooting ability on the basketball court, Libby encompasses all that we could want an Honors student to be.*

A FOND FAREWELL:

Kristina Nilaj
Math/Education

As a student at The college of New Rochelle, I had the opportunity to be in the Honors Program. As a math major, I did not expect I was going to take so many Honors courses that required so much writing but there is good with everything. In this case, I improved my writing drastically as well as took classes that were out of my field. I took an art class, called “Art of the Book,” which was very enjoyable. Due to being in the Honors Program, I was allowed to graduate in 3 and a half years. I am currently accepted in an education program known as “Race to the Top” at Mercy College. I hope to one day be a high school math teacher.



From Dr. Bass: *For me, Kristina's shining moment came at Honors Conference Day two years ago, at which the participants of a newly created Honors seminar, “Art of the Book,” led by Professor Margie Neuhaus, displayed their work. She'd been reluctant to try her hand*

at a studio art course: her usual mode of operation lay with love of math and her excellence on the athletic playing fields. But Kristina is nothing if not adventurous, and nothing if not brave. She focused on her own journey as an immigrant in the midst of her battle to stay in the United States and study. There is not a person who looked at her final project without being moved, often to tears.



Kristina, far left, with her cohort at the 2012 NRHC conference in Baltimore.

LOOKING AHEAD:
TO THE CLASS OF 2017

“There, in that living room, we rediscovered that we are also living, breathing human beings; and no matter how repressive the state became, no matter how intimidated and frightened we were, like Lolita we tried to escape and create our own little pockets of freedom.”

- Azar Nafisi

Dear Incoming Honors Students:

First and foremost we would like to welcome you to the Honors Program here at The College of New Rochelle. You have worked hard to earn this opportunity to enrich your collegiate experience through this challenging and rewarding program. As seasoned veterans, members of the Senior Symposium seminar have been granted the privilege of choosing the text for your first Honors course, and after many considerations and deliberations we have chosen *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, a memoir by Azar Nafisi.

In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Nafisi takes us through her experiences during the Iranian Revolution. As a teacher in a society dominated by a culturally dominant form of Islam, she faces strict restrictions on women, including the mandatory wearing of the veil. The memoir is not written in chronological order, but with a mixture of memories of her life and events of the time intertwining with texts from the books that are being read within her book club. Alongside the incorporation of various novels within the different sections of the work, such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Pride and Prejudice*, other ideas are also addressed: the ramifications of the Iran-Iraq War on her world, the uncertainty that remains even after the end of the war as life and teaching continues in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and on women and their rights and autonomy.

We decided on this work as the introduction into the Honors Program because it opens the door for discussion and debate on several issues prevalent in today's society. It is an interesting and intriguing insight into life in Iran through a personal perspective, allowing for greater empathy not only with the characters in the story, but also with the people of Iran themselves. We also think that this work will establish a greater understanding of a society unfamiliar to many. It is important in your collegiate career to be able to connect with the unfamiliar, and we hope this will serve as a first step in doing so.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Johnston, Molly Mary Margaret McMurray, Tazmin Uddin

WHAT HAS HONORS BEEN UP TO?

JANUARY

- A new seminar, “Once Upon A Time: American Princess,” launched with full enrollment
- Honors joined Facebook!

FEBRUARY

- Students in “American Princess” — along with the entire first year cohort — attended a performance of *Cinderella* on Broadway
- Students in “Race and Ethnicity” took part in many of the college’s Black History Month activities, including trips to Harlem’s Schomburg Center and Spoonbread restaurant
- Many Honors students attended David Gonzalez’s performance of “Sleeping Beauty” as well as his fairy tale workshop as part of the college’s “Imagination, Inquiry, & Innovation” Institute
- Students met with Dr. Edward Blum, author of *The Color of Christ*, before his standing-room -only lecture for Black History month in the Sweeny Student Center
- Dr. Richard Thompson, dean of SAS, served as a guest lecturer in “American Princess”, speaking on his field of expertise, child life services

MARCH

- First-year Honors student Claudia Benitez received the first Sr. Dorothy Ann Hall of Fame Scholar at the Westchester Women’s Hall of Fame Luncheon.
- With thanks to the office of Media Relations, the new Honors website launched.
- Renovations to the Honors Center were completed.

APRIL

- Four Honors students, Regina Alvarado, Megan Yoeono, Katy Baudendistal, and Denise Dailey, attended the NRHC Conference in Philadelphia with Dr. Bass; Regina and Denise both presented their work. Next year: Niagara Falls!
- Amelia Ellis and Regina Alvarado starred in CNR Drama’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; two of the many Honors students involved in the production
- Students presented their research at the annual Honors Conference Day.
- The Honors Board unanimously voted an amendment to the mission statement of the Honors Constitution, specifying its tradition of liberal arts for women (see sidebar)
- Several students are recognized at the LEEP dinner, including Amelia Ellis, who wins the prestigious President’s Award.

MAY

- Molly McMurray selected as student speaker for the SAS Hooding Ceremony.
- The Honors Program bids farewell to graduating seniors: Kristina Nilaj, Molly McMurray, Tazmin Uddin, Genevieve Fleckenstein, and Elizabeth Johnston.

We, the elected Board of the Honors Program at The College of New Rochelle, have ratified the following sentence for the Program’s Constitution:

The Honors Program is committed to the mission of the School of Arts & Sciences in the creation of a nurturing, interdisciplinary, and challenging, shared liberal arts experience for women.

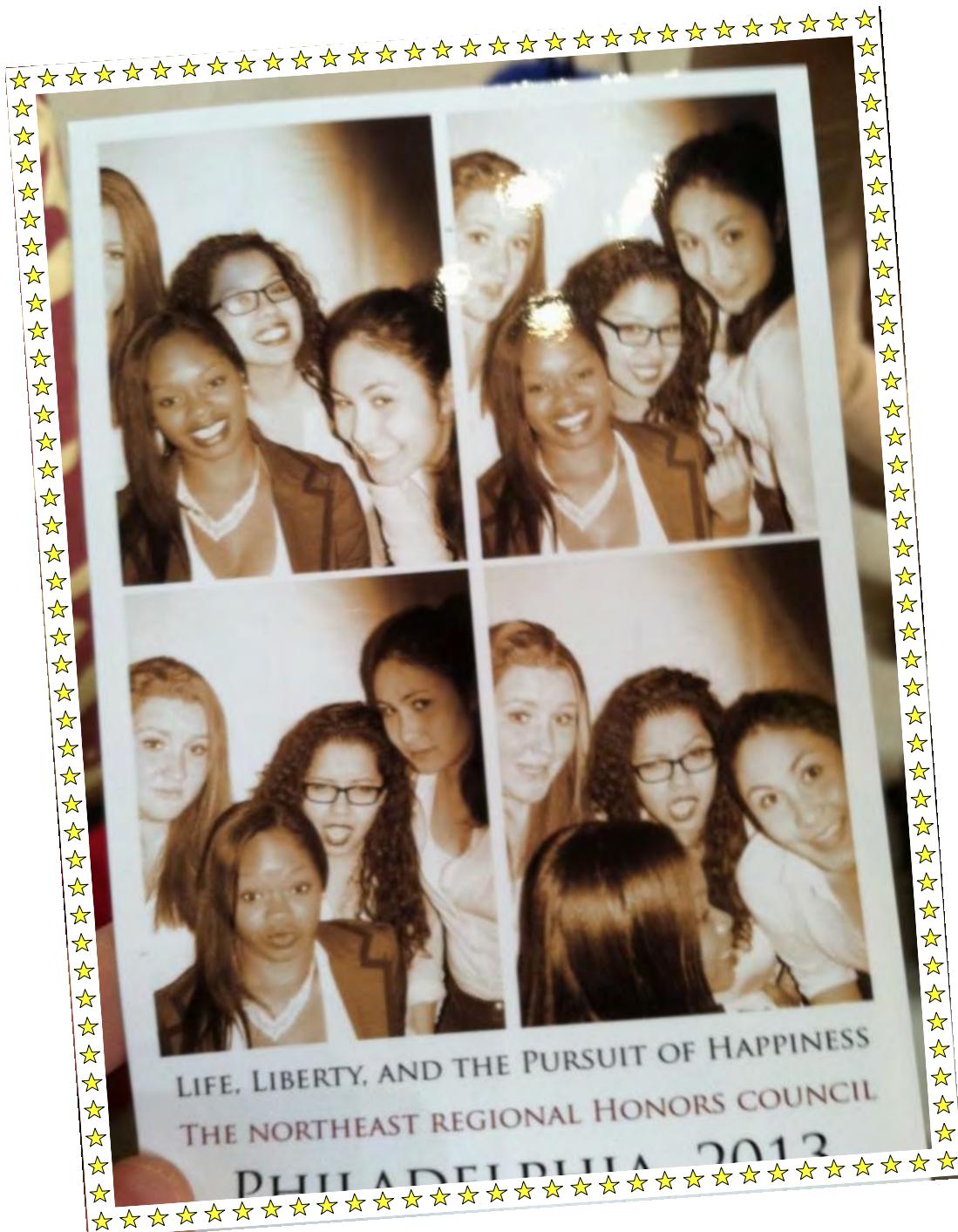
WHAT HAS HONORS BEEN UP TO?



From the top: students in "American Princess" display their crowns; Claudia accepts her award from President Huntington; "Race & Ethnicity" students pose with Dr. Bass and Dr. Blum; Dean Thompson visits the Honors seminar room; Genevieve Fleckenstein and Rasha Parker as featured dancers in *Midsummer Night's Dream*



POSTCARD FROM PHILADELPHIA:
NRHC 2013



NRHC CONFERENCE

By Mark Ramirez, CNR Media Relations

The following piece was a news item on the CNR Website: to see the original piece, visit the Honors News links at <http://departments.cnr.edu/honors/news/>

Honors Program students from The College of New Rochelle offered well-received presentations at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference, which took place April 4 to 7 in Philadelphia.

Regina Alvarado SAS'14, a biology and English major, led a panel presentation on postwar images of American women and marriage called "Single Women: Past, Present, and Future." Professor of History and Honors Program Director Dr. Amy Bass said nearly 50 people attended the presentation, "the most I have ever seen at this conference."

Denise Dailey SAS'14, a chemistry major, presented on "Who Owns Your Genes?" The presentation discussed the ethics of patents in medicine, particularly breast cancer genes, and is part of a larger project Dailey has been working on. It stood out among the many presentations at the conference.



Meagan Yeoeno, Denise Dailey, Regina Alvarado, and Caty Baudendistal begin their trip to Philadelphia at the New Rochelle train station



Left: Denise Dailey '14 presents her research on the ethics of corporate gene patents at the conference's poster session.

NRHC: PHILADELPHIA 2013

Katy Baudendistal, '16

In tribute to the great theme song of “Fresh Prince of Bel-Air,” I decided to revise the lyrics, making them applicable to our trip. On a side note, I’d like to give a shout out to Will Smith for inspiring me to become the narrative rapper I am today.

Fresh Honors Students of CNR

Now this is the story all about how
The Honors students decided to skip town.
And I’d like to take a minute, just read this
rap,
I’ll tell you how we all took over Philly’s
map.

In North Philadelphia’s Sheraton we stayed,
In the lounge* Meagan ate our worries away.
Chilling out, maxing, relaxing all cool,
And eatin’ some dinner listenin’ to a fool.
When this keynote speaker, she was up no
good
Claimed we made trouble in the neighbor-
hood
A student stood up and yelled that is wack,
He said “We’re honors students, who’s got
time for that?”

We went to Logan Square West for the day,
We pondered with Rodin and thought our
way.....
To some philly cheese steaks & some coke,
They were huge, just be careful not to choke.

Game night, competition was tough,
Defeating kid after kid, we wouldn’t give up.
Is this what competing in Honors is like?
Hmmmmmmmmmm, we might be all right.

After roundtables went, paper time near,
Regina was presenting and she had no fear
Her paper was a hit, no one could compare,
Beyoncé would’ve wanted to stay single, I
swear

We got to the dance around 9 or 10,
Looked around and said “Let’s not attend.”
We went to the lounge — it was time to relax,
Rest our brains for the day; we worked them
to the max.

**Note: The lounge was the incredibly awesome perk of Dr. Bass getting a room on the second floor; hence us gaining a hang out and free food.*



Above: Meagan samples a signature food of the city: the Philly Cheese Steak.

LOOKING BACK: NRHC PHILADELPHIA '13

Meagan Yoeono '16

My first experience at an Honors Conference was without any of the stress or any of the worry of having to give a presentation. My best friend Katy and I were invited by Dr. Bass to be supportive observers to our presenting peers, Regina and Denise. This

situation enabled me to have a light feeling while at the conference.

"We saw sights such as the Liberty Bell, the Columbus Memorial, and the Rodin Museum."

ence, where we freely explored the "Old City" aspect of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The first two days were full of exploring the historical landmarks that have defined the foundation of our country. We saw sights such as the Liberty Bell, the Columbus Memorial, and the Rodin museum. It being my first visit to Philadelphia, I enjoyed the opportunity for us to explore a city full of rich culture. But the conference was more than just exploring the interesting city. The second full day of our stay we put our sneakers away and put on our business formal. Breakfast began with roundtable discussions. My favorite was a discussion of "the right to die." We then accompanied Regina to her paper presentation. At first, it was bitter sweet because two of the panelists never showed up. But this turned out to be a good thing: less presentation and more conversation! On the last day, we attended the poster session, where we were able to walk around and talk directly one-to-one with the presenters about their topics. Denise had the most prestigious poster that I saw, and conducted herself in the utmost manner of professionalism.



Above: Meagan and Katy, with Denise below, take part in the Student Photo Scavenger Hunt, profiling the Liberty Bell with members of their team from other schools.

HONORS CONFERENCE DAY:

MEMORY AND MEMORIES

The annual Honors Conference Day took place on April 25, 2013, presenting student research and seminar projects to the campus community. Attended by students, faculty, staff, and senior level administration, HCD is not only a requirement of the Honors Diploma, it is a highlight of the year.

Students in the Honors Colloquium "Memory, Remembering, Re-telling", taught by Dr. Ne-reida Segura-Rico, Associate Professor of Modern Languages, shared their diverse projects on the theme alongside members of the Senior Symposium seminar, students from "Race and Ethnicity", and students engaged in Honors contract work for the academic year.

Individual Projects

Regina Alvarado, "Single Women: Past, Present, and Future"

Ramya Bharathi, "Organic Biology: Backyard Birds"

Alyssa Capriglione, "The Exacerbation of 'Inherently' Gendered Memories During Times of Increased Stress and Trauma"

Kayla Cummings, "Authentic Italian: The Use of Memory for Culinary Tourism"

Amelia Ellis, "Everywhere: Youth in Chains and the Memory Revolution"

Genevieve Fleckenstein, "The Representation of Mental Illness in the Autobiographical Narratives of Women"

Genevieve Fleckenstein, "Study Abroad: Tours, France"

Molly McMurray, "The Black Quarterback"

Molly McMurray, "Study Abroad: Queens University of Belfast"

Manuela Patino, "Modern Spain: the Authors of Generation of '98"

Catherine Santivanez, "Make-up!"

Alissa Sciommeri, "Just Add Ice: The Memory of the 'Miracle' and its Significance in American Culture During the Cold War and Beyond"

PHOTO GALLERY: HCD '13



Race & Ethnicity

- Left: Sophomore Amanda Hernandez's paintings on Japanese internment
- Below left: Meagan Yoen explains the seminar's work to Dr. Roxanne Zimmer, Associate Professor of Communication Arts.



Above: Senior Libby Johnston explains the work of Senior Symposium to Dr. Anne Ferrari, Associate Professor of Psychology, while (center) Cathy Santivanez checks in with her project mentor, Dr. Michael Quinn, Associate Professor of Communication Arts.

LOOKING BACK: HONORS CONFERENCE DAY 2013

In order:

- Junior Cathy Santivanez explains her Honors contract to sophomore Symone White.
- Junior Regina Alvarado, in costume, chats with English professor Daniel Smith.
- Amelia Ellis, also in costume, gives her spiel on youth rebellion to Dr. Cynthia Kraman, Professor of English.
- Genevieve Fleckenstein talks with Danielle Robinson of Admissions about mental illness in women's literature.



REFLECTION : FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Claudia Benitez, '16

The Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu wrote, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” My journey began last August when I packed my bags and headed to The College of New Rochelle. As I walked up to my room in Ursula Hall, I was greeted by amazing young women, many of whom soon became very good friends. Living in the Honors Living and Learning Community really brought a new and exciting experience to the college life. My friends and I, as new Honors students, got caught up with what to expect and the fun trips we would take along our first year. In our Honors 110 seminar, we had an incredibly enriching semester of views on the “Pursuit of Happiness”, while also reading our Honors selection, *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green. Of course, along with studying, we also got involved with the Student Government Association, many clubs, and sports. It was hard at times to get work done, get to morning swim practice, and be in class on

time, but we managed. Swim season was a lot of fun, with practice and meets; I made new friends and went on fun trips. Second semester, we had the opportunity to choose from two different Honors seminars: “American Princess” or “Race and Ethnicity.” I decided to take the “Race and Ethnicity” course and I have to admit, it has opened my eyes and challenged my ways of thinking. As the year is coming to an end, I look back to my first year at the college and have no regrets: I have made new friends, watched Broadway plays, went to Harlem for a night out on the town, met remarkable staff, and have learned not just about the world but a lot about myself.



Left: members of the Honors wing hit New York City's Fifth Avenue for the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.



First Year Honors students Sasha, Katy, and Claudia get dressed up for a night out on the town.

MEMOIR:

HURRICANE SANDY: A REFLECTION

Hurricane Sandy affected all CNR students last fall, but Staten Island Honors student Alicia Muth's experience seemed ripped from the headlines. As an Honors project, Alicia embarked on documenting her terrifying experience with English professor Daniel Smith, creating a memoir of what it was like to lose her family home. Here's an excerpt:

We lived in a small bungalow with only one floor, across the street from the beach on Staten Island. My home was in "Zone A": the evacuation zone. We did not listen to the warnings, we did not evacuate. We did not expect the storm to be that bad. Cops knocked on doors telling people they were to either evacuate themselves or get arrested. We realized no one had knocked on our door and assumed that everything would be fine. We quickly found out how wrong we were. Our family was calling to make sure that we were okay....The only real preparation for the storm that we did was park my car about half a mile away atop a hill. My mom parked her truck right out front, her gas light was on and she only had enough gas to drive up to my car if we needed a quick getaway. An uncle called and joked that he didn't care how high the water was, my brother better not lose the new Xbox that my uncle gave him. He said "I don't care if you have to stand on the couch with it above your head as the water level rises, you better not let it get damaged!" This reminded us to bring some things up from the basement: the television, cable boxes, Xbox, computer, clothes, all my school supplies and everything that I brought home for the weekend. My mom and brother went out to the beach and when they came home they mentioned that it seemed as if the ocean level had risen. I started getting really scared. I texted my boyfriend telling him that I wish we had evacuated. My mom continued to rationalize our stay. She calmed me down by saying, "Leash, is the water really going to cross the beach, the boardwalk, the park, the street, to finally get to our house?" We turned on the news and looked at the map of the storm. It was evident that a few miles down in Midland Beach there was going to be trouble with the ocean, but my mom showed me on the map how our part of Staten Island, South Beach, was being blocked by Brooklyn. It made sense that we wouldn't get the high water levels and rough waves that Midland would get.



Last year we installed a valve in the basement....My mom and brother went downstairs to shut the valve. They turned the handle and water quickly came in from the hole that the valve was placed in. My brother thought maybe they had opened the pipe, and so they turned the handle the other direction. It did not help, the water continued to come in faster than before. I ran downstairs to see what was going on and noticed that the windows in the basement had leaked and they were covered in ocean water. We decided to just wait out the storm upstairs. I had already brought my school books and decided I would get some homework done. I told my brother to get the clothes out of the dryer, that I



would fold them. He told me that the dryer was full of water, and he couldn't figure out why. I later realized that the ocean had already filled our backyard, covering the vent that let the hot air out of the dryer.

It had only been a few minutes since they went downstairs, and on his way back, my brother heard the meow of our cat who had hidden under the stairs. The water in the basement was already up to my brother's knees. He jumped back into the basement and found the cat. He threw her at me, and I brought her upstairs. It was only 6pm. The water filled the basement first. Then it caused the power to go out. I told my mom that we should leave, and then looked out the window to see a car floating down the street. I realized there was no way we could get to my mom's car to drive to mine. We continued to look out the window and saw the 20 foot container from the park start to float towards the house. My mom pushed us into her bedroom. I yelled that it wouldn't do any good. We watched the container float down the street next to my house like the street was a river. My brother and I began using our phones to dial 911 in hopes of getting rescued. My mom answered the calls of our worried family. It wasn't even 6:30. The water continued to rise....About an hour had passed. My uncle from Florida called and asked how we were doing. My mother quickly explained the situation and told him that we were about to go into the attic to get to higher ground. He reminded us of the harsh reality that our attic had no windows and if the water continued to rise, we could get stuck and drown. It became evident to us that we could not stay in the house for the night and we still had not gotten in contact with someone who could send rescue. We were now in freezing ocean water higher than our waists....It was only 7:30. High tide was not until 9. We needed to leave. We began to feel waves inside the house. These waves were powerful enough to knock our house right off its foundation....Our cats were on my brother's bed, scared of the rising water. The way the house had moved we could not get the front door to open....We ran over to the back door through the furniture that floated around us. I could feel my feet get numb. When we made it to the back door we saw that the fridge had fallen over. We remembered that there was a window with a broken screen behind the fridge. My brother tried to unlock it but he didn't know that the two locks had to both face inward, as opposed to just one direction. I pushed him off of the fridge, my mom cried that he was about to panic, and I unlocked the window. We swam out of the window and into the backyard. I was worried about my mom. Before we moved to New York she was always terrified to get into the water....I wasn't sure if she could handle all it. I still had my phone in my hand, calling 911. We didn't know where we to go.

My brother was the first to see that our neighbor's deck was still intact. We swam and clung to the fence between our houses, unsure of what our next step would be. When we got onto the deck my mom saw that our neighbor who evacuated had a second floor. This is the same neighbor, the psychic, who spoke to me before I left for work. We broke into the back window and deduced that we were in a bedroom. My brother knew the layout of the house. He led our way to the stairs, and we grabbed something to drink from the kitchen on the way up; we knew we had to spend the night on the second floor. We got there and found it to be more like an attic. My neighbor had things all throughout the room: a mattress; bags filled with men's dress-shirts, ties, scarves, socks, coats, and shoes; a couple of blankets; and a large flashlight. We took off our clothes and tried to get warm in the dry ones. We all had to frequently change our socks because they got wet from our feet. I continued to call 911 for rescue. I was constantly told that someone would arrive. I texted a few loved ones that we were alive, when service allowed. We got on the mattress together and tried to keep warm.

I tried to keep everybody calm and convince my mother that her idea to swim back to the house to check on the pets was a bad idea. I asked her to tell us stories about things that happened when she was a kid. She told one about my Uncle Mark whose son recently passed away. He told her that the firefly's glow was actually the eyes of a creature that ate chickens and left their feet as proof. He called them "Wickalars," this was a story I knew all too well. I started to remember the silly tea parties that my mom and I used to have together while she and my father were still married. I sang "You Are My Sunshine" to my brother, the song that my mom sang to him when he was a baby; he started to cry. I would do anything to overpower the sounds of the wind against the roof and the waves....

What Would Your Crown Look Like?

Members of "American Princess: Once Upon a Time," taught by Dr. Bass, had an assignment both fun and revealing: design a crown that says something about you. The results were amazing — favorite poems, CDs, jewels, and even maps sat upon each seminar member's head. The assignment was so much fun, students who were not in the class also contributed to the crown collection!

